

## PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

## “The Three Rs” at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana’s non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment.

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2012:

## Building Relationships

## Alpine Theatre Project, Inc., Whitefish:

Last year, Alpine Theatre Project had significant success in using social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and YouTube to engage its constituents on a more immediate level. ATP decided to follow this success by increasing its engagement in social media. In turn, ATP has become lauded in Montana by both the artistic and tourism-based industries for its use of social media.

Begun in 2011, ATP now encourages patrons to photograph productions before they begin and post the photos on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. All that we ask is that they credit the proper designers whose works are being showcased.

ATP is also using social networks to facilitate communication among artists. For example, for its recent production of “Little Shop of Horrors,” director Betsi Morrison and her design team used the social network, Pinterest, as a way of amassing images to serve as inspiration for the costume and scenic designs for the production.

Facebook continues to be the single best way ATP now communicates with the public it serves. Patrons routinely post comments and messages about our productions. After a recent production of our educational outreach program with 111 local students, a parent of one of the students wrote on ATP’s Facebook page:

“Just wanted to say thank you to all of AKTP for your ‘Little Mermaid’ production! Watching my little girl unfold over five weeks and then seeing this beyond expectation performance has got to make you guys feel good! Norah loved the experience and can’t wait to do it again! As for Luke and Betsi, Whitefish is so happy to have you! You two have brought class to our community and you continue to impress me show after show! Bravo AKTP!”

ATP has also increased its use of video to offer more in-depth explanations of its productions and show behind-the-scenes footage of what it takes to create a show. All these videos are distributed via social media networks to increase viewing and engagement.

In an effort to reach out to young students this summer, ATP expanded its backstage tour

program. Traditionally offered to donors and sponsors, ATP held a special “Family Matinee” of a performance of “Little Shop of Horrors” where it offered a backstage tour to the young children in the audience after the performance. Children were brought backstage by ATP Executive Director Luke Walrath, and shown all of the different props and scenic pieces used in the performance. This was done in an effort to better involve children in the experience of attending theatre.

## Creating Relevance

**Intermountain Opera Bozeman:** ... In addition to utilizing the opera itself to break barriers and change attitudes, IOB held its first Opera Run. This event attracted an entirely

different demographic and introduced them to opera in an exciting, fun way.

The event consisted of a one-mile run for kids, a 5K for runners and walkers and a 10-mile route for serious runners. There were over 150 registered participants – a very respectable number for a first-time run.

Innovative opera-focused additions were added to help promote the opera. The races were started with a large gong instead of the typical gunshot, and singers were posted at every water station. They not only serenaded the runners, but

created quite a buzz with people passing by.

At the awards ceremony after all the races were finished, one of the professional opera singers who was in town for “Hansel and Gretel” sang an aria from the opera to give people a true taste of what they would hear if they attended.

## Return on Investment

**Great Falls Symphony:** The Great Falls Symphony is very much a “player” in the local and state business economy. This past spring over 70 musicians traveled to Great Falls, stayed in Great Falls hotels and ate in local restaurants as part a nationwide search and audition process to fill seven full-time artistic positions within our organization.

Ultimately, the seven new employees joined with current artistic and administrative staff to make the 16 members of our “family.” In this way, through job creation and salaries alone, the Great Falls Symphony returns over \$350,000 to the local and state economy annually, and over \$50,000 in additional state and



A 70-year-old runner completes Intermountain Opera Bozeman's inaugural Opera Run in 2012.

federal taxes and benefits.

In addition, the GFSA returns another \$25,000 to the community through per-service honorariums for 50 local musicians. Add to this the organization’s own purchase of local goods and services and the impact of the people from rural areas who contribute to local stores, restaurants and hotels when they spend a Saturday night at the symphony during the season.

If only one-half of the GFSA concert audiences spend an average of \$10 for childcare, restaurants, parking, after-concert entertainment, etc., this reflects an additional \$50,000 deposited into the local economy annually. Estimating a conservative multiplier effect of .4, as these dollars are turned over in the economy, we begin to see what even a relatively small regional arts organization can contribute!

The Great Falls Symphony takes its role as a contributor to the local business economy and the capacity we have to create a rich arts environment very seriously. We are aware that it is often a significant factor for people making a decision to live and work in Great Falls.

We work closely with the Great Falls Economic Development Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Great Falls, the Military Affairs Committee and employers such as Benefis Health Systems, the public school system, Davidson Companies and others who are active recruiters to the region. When appropriate, representatives from these entities are invited to sit on our board.

We are told that during the employee recruitment process, the livability of our community, including schools and a rich arts and cultural environment, factor high on the list of top qualities sought as potential employees evaluate their employment options.

As we look at these qualities, the message becomes clear ... The contributions to a vibrant arts community made by organizations such as the Great Falls Symphony not only keep residents and their discretionary spending close to home, but bring high quality workers to the community and attracts visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive.



The Cascade Quartet of the Great Falls Symphony: Contributing to the local business economy.



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## Fundraising realities every board member must face

For board members, the essence of big-gifts fundraising can be distilled into 43 “realities.” David Lansdowne explores each of them in the second edition of his book, *Fundraising Realities Every Board Member Must Face: A One-Hour Crash Course on Raising Major Gifts for Nonprofit Organizations*.

In a recent edition of GuideStar, he singles out just three:

- Regardless of income or assets, most of us find it hard to thin out our wallets;
- A few contribute the most;
- The secret of success: Ask for it.

The author has spent his professional life in the nonprofit sector, serving in a wide variety of development and administrative positions for educational, cultural, and health organizations throughout the United States.

Read the full story at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).